

Washington, DC - Congressman Maurice Hinchey (D-NY) today announced that he helped secure a \$50,000 federal grant for the Sullivan County Ag Local Development Corporation (Ag LDC) to assist with the development of a red meat processing facility in Liberty, New York. Earlier this year, Hinchey contacted the U.S. Department of Agriculture Rural Development in support of Ag LDC's grant request. The project also received preferential consideration for its application because of its location in the Sullivan-Wawarsing Rural Economic Area Partnership (REAP) Zone, a special USDA designation for the area that Hinchey established in 1999.

"Developing a red meat processing facility in Sullivan County will help create jobs and provide area farmers with a convenient and reliable way to process their meat," Hinchey said. "The federal grant will help get this initiative off the ground and support the efforts of family farms to serve the growing local and metropolitan markets for locally-raised meat. As we continue to work to strengthen our economy, it's vital that we continue to invest in efforts like these that promote small businesses and economic growth."

The funding will help pay for technical assistance for the development of the facility as well as business and operational plans. The grant will also be used to identify a processing facility operator.

Hinchey developed the REAP Zone initiative as part of an effort to help spur economic development in struggling rural areas. REAP Zones are first cousins to the internationally recognized Empowerment Zones & Enterprise Communities and are designed to give certain communities an advantage at receiving competitive federal grants. In January 1999, Hinchey persuaded the USDA to establish this new program in the congressional district he represents on a 10-year trial basis. As a result, the REAP Zone in Sullivan County and Wawarsing and a second REAP Zone in Tioga County were established. The Sullivan-Wawarsing REAP Zone covers all of Sullivan County as well as the Town of Wawarsing, including the Village of Ellenville, in Ulster County and the Tioga County REAP Zone covers all of Tioga County. The REAP Zones in the State of New York are two of only five such areas in the entire nation.

Earlier this year, USDA Rural Development signed an agreement with both the Sullivan County-Wawarsing and the Tioga REAP that extends the REAP program for those areas until September 30, 2012. The authorization to extend the REAP program was made possible through legislation that Hinchey helped pass through Congress last year.

Hinchey Announces \$50,000 Federal Grant for Red Meat Processing Center in Sullivan County

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